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BPW Approves \$4.8 Million Contract for Redevelopment of Enoch Pratt Free Central Library

(Annapolis) -- The Board of Public Works (BPW) today approved \$4.8 million to complete design plans for the redevelopment of Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Central Library. Building on its legacy as a pioneer in the development of the modern public library, renovations to the Central Library will preserve its original 1930s architecture while creating a 21st century library experience. The Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) is managing the project.



Renovations to the 275,000 square-foot Central Library will restore the architectural grandeur of the building while incorporating environmentally responsible design standards and the latest technology to better serve customers. When the refresh is completed in August 2018, there will be more opportunities for learning, research, creativity and civic engagement.

"The renovations will carry on the Enoch Pratt Free Library's legacy of providing information and services to all Marylanders," said Carla D. Hayden, CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. "Every area of the State Library Resource Center, which is the Central Library, will offer new opportunities for engagement. Quiet rooms will provide a place for training and collaboration, creation stations will offer hands-on learning, and classes, workshops and computers will be available in the job center. There will be a new energy to the library experience that complements Maryland's rich history of library service."

The Enoch Pratt Free Library serves the public as well as government, academic, and cultural institutions throughout the state. Established in 1882 by Baltimore businessman and philanthropist Enoch Pratt, the system now has 21 branches citywide. The Central Library is designated as the State Library Resource Center, which allows materials and information to be shared with all Maryland residents. When the current Central Library building opened in 1933, it was the first library in the country to introduce separate collection departments.

Already a leader in adopting technology to better serve its library customers, renovations to the Central Library include the installation of laptop and smartphone docking ports at reading tables, and the creation of tech-takeout stations where patrons can download selections onto their tablets and e-Readers.

Infrastructure improvements include a new information technology system, new bathrooms and elevators, as well as air conditioning and heating units. New security and fire protection systems will better preserve and protect the library's print materials and special collections. To meet national air quality and energy standards, new mechanical and electrical systems will be installed, along with energy efficient windows, lighting and roofing. Incorporating environmentally responsible construction standards will help the Central Library earn a LEED Silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Considered the heart of the Pratt Free Library system, the historical integrity of the Central Library will also be restored. Architectural details such as woodwork, brass work and ornate ceilings will be restored to their original appearance. Additionally, the Edgar Allan Poe Room will be refurbished. Letters written by Poe and a lock of his hair are exhibited in the room, among other items.

"The Enoch Pratt Free Central Library has offered Marylanders unparalleled resources for many generations," said Alvin C. Collins, DGS Secretary. "The renovations will ensure the library continues its vital role as a place to gather and exchange ideas. This project reflects DGS' commitment to Doing Great Service."

Background

The original design contract was awarded in 1998 to the Baltimore architectural firm Ayers Saint Gross. The team also included the historic preservation design firm, Byer Blinder Belle of New York. Before the design work was completed, funding was suspended in 2001 due to a budget shortfall.

In FY 2010, \$1.55 million was appropriated to restart the design process and conduct a study to determine how current codes, environmental standards and changes in the library's operations impacted the original design intent. The modified contract was awarded today to Ayers Saint Gross for completion of the design and construction documents, based on the results of the study.

The General Assembly is considering appropriations for FY15 to provide additional funding for the project. Funding requests will also be submitted to the legislature for the three fiscal years beginning with FY16. The total cost for construction is expected to be \$73 million, with the overall cost of the project totaling \$99 million. Most of the funding is coming from the State; Baltimore is contributing \$6 million.

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